

August 10, 2000

Docket No. 98-045N4  
USDA/FSIS Docket Clerk  
300 12th St. SW., rm. 102 Cotton Annex  
Washington, DC 20250-3700

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Docket No. 00N-0504  
FDA's Dockets Management Branch ✓  
300 12th St. SW., rm. 102, Cotton Annex  
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Re: Forced Molting In Laying Hens

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to urge the USDA and the FDA to prohibit forced molting, which is not only a primary source of Salmonella in laying hens but is also inhumane.

According to information I received from the Humane Society of the United States, The President's Council on Food Safety has identified egg safety as one component of food safety that warrants immediate federal interagency action. In response, the "Egg Safety From Production to Consumption: An Action Plan to Eliminate Salmonella Enteritidis Illnesses Due to Eggs" was announced in December 1999. The Plan identifies systems and practices to eliminate eggs as a source of human Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) illness.

Now, the FDA and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) have published their "current thinking papers" recommending approaches "to ensure egg safety from farm to table." Unfortunately, neither document addresses the primary cause of infection in hens and eggs -- inhumane treatment, especially the practice of forced molting, in which hens are starved for five to fourteen days to accelerate egg production. Forced molting suppresses hens' immune systems, leaving them easy prey to SE infection. The USDA has acknowledged through its own studies that forced molting is a primary cause of SE illness.

Please work to end this cruel and unsafe practice.

Thanks for listening.

Sincerely,



Tom Mohr  
717 Randolph  
Oak Park, IL 60302-3203

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